

HAMPTON BUDGET COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 18, 2007

Budget Committee Members Present

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman
Michael Plouffe, Vice-Chairman
Rick Griffin, Selectman Representative
Jim Desrosiers, School Board Representative
Pat Collins
Victor DeMarco
Maury Friedman
Dick Hansen (7:05)
Eileen Latimer (7:30)
Jack Lessard
Richard Nichols
Michael Pierce
Norman Silberdick

Excused

Russ Bernstein

Chairman Woolsey called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Chairman Woolsey introduced the members of the Committee

Approval of Minutes – June 19, 2007

Moved by Mr. Lessard, seconded by Mr. Pierce, to approve the Minutes of June 19, 2007, as amended.

Vote: 9 yes, 0 no, 2 abstentions (Collins, Desrosiers). Motion passed.

Chairman Woolsey passed out a schedule for Budget Committee meetings. This schedule will be posted at the Town Office. Chairman Woolsey discussed the Month-End August 31, 2007 Report from Mike Schwotzer. At the June meeting of the Budget Committee encumbrances were discussed. In this report, there is still \$531,000 in the 2006 purchase order column. This is unacceptable. Chairman Woolsey asked Selectman Griffin to take the Committee's concern back to the Board of Selectman. These encumbrances must be cleaned up.

Chairman Woolsey introduced Jim Gaylord, Superintendent of Schools; Sandy Nickerson, Chairman of the Hampton School Board; Nancy Andrews, Principal at

Centre School; David O'Connor, Principal at Marston School; and Rosemary Lamers, Hampton School Board member.

Mr. Gaylord introduced Chris Sousa who is the new principal at Hampton Academy Junior High. Mr. Gaylord also said that Ms. Nickerson has been on the School Board for 16 years, Ms. Andrews has been an educator for 22 years and Mr. O'Connor for 10 years. Ms. Nickerson said that Mr. Gaylord has been an educator for 40 years.

Ms. Nickerson said they will be working on their budget in November.

In response to some questions posed by Mr. Pierce, Mr. Gaylord said that there are 222 staff personnel and 1,255 in the student body. Mr. Pierce said he anticipated savings in the new contract. Health insurance was changed to a new company and the charge was decreased by \$500,000. Also received a good rate for oil and electricity for next year.

Mr. Gaylord said teachers receive no incentive bonuses.

Mr. Gaylord said that Bob Berry is the new Business Administrator and will be at the next meeting between the School Board and the Budget Committee.

The Warrant Article for \$210,000 for technology items was discussed. Mr. Pierce asked why that amount is needed year after year when the cost of all computer-related equipment and software has decreased by 10-25% every year during the last few years. Mr. Gaylord said that PC's receive a tremendous amount of use and quality equipment must be purchased to meet the tech needs of the students.

Mr. Gaylord said the teacher contract will be in the budget and there will be somewhere between 4 and 5 warrant articles. This year was closed out with a very fine audit and approximately \$467,000 will be returned to the taxpayers of Hampton.

Chairman Woolsey said that there is approximately \$3.4 million in unfunded mandates and asked if there is hope for any more federal money. Mr. Gaylord said there is no significant movement in that direction at this time. Not much will happen until after the upcoming presidential election.

Mr. Silberdick said that the school budget has been managed very well.

Mr. Nichols said that the voters have been very generous to the schools. The increase has been around 8% each year for the past few years. Income for taxpayers has increased only 3% per year. If you add in a 3% per year inflation rate, by 2016, property taxes will rise to 33% of the average family income.

Mr. Gaylord said oil and oil byproducts control a lot of what they do. These costs and electricity costs have skyrocketed and this is out of their control. Teachers deserve the recognition of pay increases. Mr. Gaylord said the answer to this problem is in Concord. A method must be found to do the funding. Mr. Gaylord said their budget represents the needs of the children of this town.

Chairman Woolsey asked about lobbying. Mr. Gaylord said the School Boards Association Delegates Assembly is coming up and this issue will be discussed. The School Administrators Association is also working on this. Mr. Gaylord said Representative Nancy Stiles is also helping.

Mr. Pierce asked about school buses. So many children are being driven to school and the buses are not filled. Why is this when the buses are being paid for by the taxpayers. Mr. Gaylord said parents have the right to drive their children to school and there is an RSA in place which mandates that bus service is provided.

Mr. Pierce asked about recycling. Mr. Gaylord said that is being looked into and alternate energy sources are being sought.

Mr. Friedman asked about the decrease in school population. Mr. Gaylord said this can only be predicted for approximately five years out and shows only 15-20 students per year.

Ms. Latimer said she thinks the grant writers are the unsung heroes. She said that lobbyists are needed. She suggested that when political candidates stop off in Hampton, they should be asked "What are you going to do for us?". Ms. Latimer suggested the possibility of cutting back on the number of buses and condensing routes. Mr. Gaylord said that you must have the number of seats on the bus to accommodate all. Chairman Woolsey suggested that a packet be handed out to visiting candidates and also given to the press.

Mr. DeMarco complimented Mr. Gaylord on the administration of the schools. He said Mr. Gaylord's answers have addressed many concerns of the taxpayers.

Mr. Lessard said that Mr. Gaylord's explanations were very good. Mr. Lessard said he wants the best education for the children of the Town.

Mr. Hansen said the presentation was excellent and that Mr. Gaylord is motivated towards maintaining costs or reducing them where feasible while keeping a quality education for the children.

Mr. Nichols said he would like to get a copy of the budget prior to the December 6th meeting by November 30.

School Board Report

Mr. Desrosiers said the number one concern of the School Board is curriculum. The next focus is the budget.

Selectman's Report

Mr. Griffin said he was very confident in the way Mr. Welch is handling things. He is a very valuable asset.

Mr. Collins left at 8:45 p.m.

Chairman Woolsey said she had asked Mr. Schwotzer to hold the Budget Committee budget to the same as last year with the reduction of the purchase of the *Town & City* magazines.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday October 16, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen's Meeting Room.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Committee, Mr. Lessard **moved**, seconded by Mr. Hansen, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Rice
Secretary

Mary-Louise Woolsey, Chairman